The name *Fort apache* originated from an old western movie about cowboys and Indians. The cowboys were the good guys and the Indians were considered savage people. The name fort apache was given to the 41st precinct by the officers who worked there because of the role it apparently played in the South Bronx. Why would they really call it fort apache? They called it this because they are basically calling the police of the 41st precinct the good guys and the people in the community savages. On march 1st 1980, Time-Life Films started filming for the movie *Fort Apache, the Bronx.* By the time the film opened in February 1981, organizing efforts against it had spread around the country. The committee against fort apache (CAFA) started protesting against this movie because of the way is exploited ghettos and they way it portrayed Puerto Ricans and African Americans. Many believe the movie *Fort Apache the Bronx* had a strong racial stereotype against Puerto Ricans and Africans, and the people had a right to have protest against it.

*Fort Apache the Bronx* is about the 41st Police Precinct in the South Bronx. The protagonist is 18-year veteran Murphy (Paul Newman) who is looking to be a good cop, but also determined to do it with as little aggravation as possible by combining good police work with a social conscience. When new Police Chief Connolly (Ed Asner) come in and intends to get the cop killer who has been shooting police man, the neighborhood begins to rebel with rioting against the police force and Fort Apache. Connelly mandates arrests to be made regardless of infractions in order to find the killer responsible for the police murders, but when Murphy sees fellow officer Morgan (Danny Aiello) murder an innocent man; he must address his conscience to decide to confront his fellow cop. Although the movie may have had a good message, this movie was protested against because of the way it exploited the south Bronx and more specifically African Americans and Puerto Ricans.

In an interview with Richie Perez (a former member/ leader of The Committee against ‘Fort apache’ ) states that in many movies like *Black boy jungle* and *The young savages* Puerto Ricans and African Americans are portrayed as outcast, social parasites, criminals, and particularly on women being prostitutes. The committee believed that the filming of *Fort apache the Bronx* will just add more to that list of names. Perez also says that “Fort apache brought up many issues such as police brutality and the decay of the communities, but it failed to show what the root causes were; instead they blamed the people who lived there.” The committee against Fort apache did many things in order to stop the broadcasting of the film because they do know that it is possible to have a unified, collective, and effective action against media racism.

On April 7th 1980 Paul Newman called a news conference to address issues related to *Fort apache the Bronx*. He says “It’s not a racist picture. It is tough on Puerto Ricans, blacks and the neighborhood, but the two villains are Irish cops who throw a Puerto Rican off a roof”. He would say this considering that he’s the star of this 14 million dollar film. What Newman doesn’t see is the exaggerated details that are used in the movie. In the movie it is all an exaggerated crime rate. It makes it seem like the south Bronx is the most horrible place with the highest crime rate and that the people there are all criminals. If you look at the crime records from 1979-1980 you can see that the recorded crimes from the 41st precinct are in the middle between bed-stuy and Harlem. Harlem has an even higher crime rate then the South Bronx. If there was that much crime recorded at the 41st precinct then just imagine how much crime there is at the 23rd precinct in Harlem. Mr. Newman also doesn’t see the discrimination in the film. Mr. Perez stated in his argument that there was not one decent minority-group person in the script. In the movie there is a part where a police officer starting acting dumb in order to get a knife from a robber. What would that make you think about the minority group that the robber was from?

*Fort apache the Bronx* also displays a lot of police brutality. The famous part of the movie is when an Irish police officer throws a Puerto Rican man off a roof. This is the only good part of this movie because if shows what is true about the 41st precinct, but how does this connect to the movies issues? It does because in the nine months proceeding the first announcements that Fort Apache was going to be filmed in the South Bronx, twelve unarmed blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York City were shot or beaten to death by the police. In one of the reports a Bronx police man saw Arturo Reyes stealing two containers of orange juice from a parked car. The officer said the seventeen-year-old attacked him with a knife, and he fired in self-defense. However, a doctor’s report revealed that Reyes had been shot in the back of the neck. Paralyzed from the neck down, he sadly died three weeks later. So if Arturo Reyes did try to attack the police man with a knife then why was he shot in the back of the neck instead of the front part of his body? It is definitely uncertain that a paralyzed man can attack a man if he can’t even move his body. In another report the mother of Luis Baez (a recently released mental patient) had called the precinct on August 22 to take him back to the hospital because she thought he was suffering a relapse. When they arrived, Baez was cutting his mother’s carpet with a small scissors. The police chased him to a fire escape and knocked him down to the pavement below. During this chaos, witnesses later testified that Baez had dropped the scissors. Baez suffered from paranoia and had tried to run. Mrs. Baez and her neighbors watched the police opened fire. One policeman even emptied his revolver, reloaded and fired once more. It was very unusual that in almost all 12 reports the police officers stated that the people all had knifes and had attacked them and they had shot them/beat them in defense. Apparently, in none of these cases were any police officers even suspended. The police of the 41st Precinct had a long reputation of racist abuse in the South Bronx. In 1978, it was identified by officials in the police department itself as a “problem precinct.” Police officials noted that it was one of the precincts that had a history of ‘non-acceptance’ of civilian complaints alleging that officers used excessive force, were discourteous, or abused their authority.” It also ‘flunked’ a department integrity test, according to the report. The movie basically makes the police in 41st precinct look like the good guys but in all truth that is untrue

The CAFA not only protested against this movie because of the community’s stereo type but because of the way it would have made Puerto Ricans and Africans look in general. CAFA wanted to stop media racism in general and Fort Apache the Bronx was the first step. CAFA had a right to protest against this movie and shouldn’t stop trying to stop media racism in other movies. Even though they may have not gotten what they wanted but they still succeeded in trying, and shouldn’t stop trying. Even without success they still made an imprint on people by trying to stop *Fort Apache the Bronx*.

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